

Government and charity partner The Share Foundation launch unique investment scheme for children in care

Every child in care for over a year will now receive a nest egg to start adult life, thanks to an innovative investment scheme launched today (Wednesday, 28 November) by the Department for Education and The Share Foundation.

It is the first ever public-private partnership specifically designed to unlock significant voluntary donations directly for the benefit of children in care; the most disadvantaged young people in the UK today.

The new Junior Individual Saving Accounts (ISAs) will reach more than 55,000 children and young people in the UK care system in the first year alone; after a successful public campaign by charities Action for Children and Barnardo's secured £16.7 million for the scheme.

Following registration by Local Authorities, The Share Foundation will establish Junior ISAs with an initial £200 from the Government and continue to raise additional to build each account into a real inheritance for young people exiting the care system.

Children in care are some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged people in the UK. More than a third (35 per cent) of young people leave the care system by the age of 16 and, of those, 45 per cent will not be in education, employment or training (NEETs) three years later.[\[1\]](#)

Last year, 22-year-old Lee, alongside many other care leavers, supported Action for Children and Barnardo's' *On Our Own Two Feet* campaign, calling on the Government to include financial support for children in care in the 2011 Budget. Lee explained:

“When I left care it was a really daunting time – I was suddenly on my own and needed to work out how to live independently. I had to grow up fast. I was also really aware that I didn't have any savings, and that limited the plans I could make. Just having a bit of financial support would have made a real difference. It would have helped me to stand on my own two feet, made me feel safer and less stressed.”

The Junior ISAs scheme will provide young people in care with:

- a financial asset to help alleviate the pressures of leaving care, such as setting up a home, transport and further education;

- an opportunity for those who might never have had a bank account to learn about saving, budgeting and managing money.
- a specialist helpline and education resources for institutions and individual carers, provided by financial education charity pfeg (Personal Finance Education Group)

Ahead of his speech at this evening's launch event, Edward Timpson, Minister for Children and Families, said:

"I know from speaking to young people who have been in care that they all too often have to grow up faster and be independent at a younger age. The fact that they don't have a family nest egg to fall back on makes it all the more important that we give them that opportunity to save for their life after care through the Junior ISA."

Chair of The Share Foundation, Gavin Oldham, said:

"The key to the success of the Junior ISAs is the generosity of the UK public, coming forward to help the thousands of children who do not have a family of their own to provide for them. We're asking wealthy individuals, trusts and companies, particularly from the financial sector, to boost the Government's initial investment and help us break the cycle of deprivation from which so many looked after children struggle to escape. And our partnership with financial education charity pfeg means that we are able to offer young care leavers crucial guidance on how manage their inheritance well, in the hope that they can go on to achieve their full potential."

Dame Clare Tickell, Chief Executive of Action for Children, added:

"For children in care, who have often had a troubled start in life, leaving care can mean falling off a cliff edge without any savings or support. We have been campaigning on this issue for a long time, so the new Junior ISAs are a very positive move - not only easing the difficult transition from care to independent living, but going some way towards showing vulnerable young people that someone cares about their future."

Barnardo's Chief Executive, Anne Marie Carrie, said:

"The Junior ISA is a positive step from the Government, illustrating their commitment to care leavers. Parents hope to be able to have savings put aside for their children but children in care do not have that luxury. Barnardo's hopes members of the public will donate to this fund wherever possible so the children in our care system can take a step closer to achieving an equal footing with their peers. Turning 18 is a vital stage in any young person's life and by donating to the Junior ISA fund care leavers will feel your support."

To find out more about Junior ISAs for young people in care or to make a donation, please visit www.sharefound.org or call 01296 310400.

Notes to editors

- **The Share Foundation** was established in 2005 to reduce the generational cycle of deprivation affecting the most disadvantaged children and young people by encouraging highly targeted wealth distribution. Initially it operated alongside the Child Trust Fund scheme, making grants for the benefit of Looked After children from a range of Local Authorities. Its trustees are Gavin Oldham, Ruth Kelly, John Reeve, Henrietta Royle and Christopher Daws. For more information on The Share Foundation, please visit www.sharefound.org
- **pfeg** (Personal Finance Education Group) is the UK's leading financial education charity, providing free support, resources and expert consultancy to help schools plan and teach financial capability. Its mission is to ensure that all young people leaving school are equipped with the confidence, skills and knowledge they need to manage their money well, now in the future. For more information visit www.pfeg.org or follow @pfeg_org
- **Action for Children** is a UK children's charity delivering services that respond to the local needs of children, young people, their families and communities. We support and speak out for the most vulnerable and neglected children and young people, for as long as it takes to make a difference in their lives. For more information on our work, please visit actionforchildren.org.uk or like us on [facebook.com/actionforchildren](https://www.facebook.com/actionforchildren) or follow us on Twitter @aslongasittakes
- **Barnardo's** works directly with over 100,000 children, young people and their families every year through over 415 projects across the UK. We use the knowledge gained from our work with children to campaign for better policy and to champion the rights of every child. With the right help, committed support and a little belief, even the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children can turn their lives around.
- Action for Children and Barnardo's launched *On Our Own Two Feet* in February 2011, following the cessation of the Child Trust Fund that provided money for young people leaving care. In two weeks, over 1,200 people – including young people in care and care leavers - emailed MPs asking them to support the proposal for a savings scheme for Looked After Children.

End notes

^[1] Statistics provided by the Department for Education